



Libyan EFL Students' Attitudes Towards Using Facebook Groups as a Learning Tool for Improving Writing: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students at Faculty of Languages - Al-Azizia

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ملخص البحث

بحثت هذه الدراسة اتجاهات طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية الليبيين نحو استخدام مجموعات الفيس بوك كوسيلة تعليمية لتحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة. اعتمد الباحث المنهج الكمي، واستخدم الاستبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات، حيث تضمن عشرة أسئلة مغلقة وسؤالين مفتوحين. جُمعت البيانات خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من السنة الأكاديمية 2025/2024. شارك في هذه الدراسة 35 طالبا مسجلين في مقرر كتابة خلال هذا الفصل الدراسي في كلية اللغات بمدينة العزيزية. تم دعوة الطلبة للانضمام إلى مجموعات خاصة على الفيس بوك أنشأها الباحث ومعلمي مقرر الكتابة الآخرين لمساعدة الطلاب على تجربة استخدام مجموعات الفيس بوك في تحسين مهاراتهم في الكتابة. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية عموماً لديهم اتجاهات إيجابية نحو استخدام فيس بوك لتحسين مهارات الكتابة. حيث يعتقدون أن مجموعات فيس بوك يمكن أن تكون فعالة في تنظيم الأفكار قبل الكتابة وتعلم مفردات جديدة من خلال التعليقات الآخرين. كما يشعرون أيضاً بالتحفيز إذا تفاعل زملائهم بشكل إيجابي مع تعليقاتهم.

Abstract

This study investigated Libyan EFL students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups to improve their writing skills. The researcher adopted a quantitative approach and used a questionnaire as the data collection instrument, which consisted of ten closed-ended items and two open-ended ones. Data were collected during the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025. The participants in this study included 35 students enrolled in writing courses this semester at the Faculty of Languages in Al-Aziza. The participants were added to private writing groups that were purposefully created by the researcher and other writing teachers to help students integrating Facebook groups to improve their writing skills. The results revealed that EFL students generally have positive attitudes toward using Facebook groups to improve writing. They believe that Facebook groups can be effective in organizing ideas and in learning new vocabulary from the comments. They also feel motivated if other students react positively to their comments.

Keywords: Attitudes, Social media, a Facebook group



1. Background of the Study

These days, the use of social media is growing rapidly in Libya, especially among university students. The rapid increase of using social media can be generally attributed to various technological advancements such as the widespread of the internet and the continuous development of computer and phone devices (Sanad, 2016). These factors encourage university students to integrate these platforms into higher education. Integrating social networks in the English learning process positively affects students' performance and plays a key role in the development of language skills. Recent research regarding the influence of social media on the learning process shows that students prefer several types of social platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, blog, and Facebook which, in turn, improve their English skills including speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Mudra et al., 2022).

Among these types of social media, Facebook was chosen to be investigated in this study due to its widespread use among EFL students at the Faculty of Language, Al-Azizia. Al-hamba and Sahboon (2022) found that the majority of EFL students at the faculty of languages in Al-Azizia are active members of Facebook and it is used daily among students. The current study aims to investigate students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups to improve writing skills. The motivation for carrying out this research comes from the researcher's teaching experience with EFL students at the Faculty of Languages who have been observed joining Facebook groups for academic purposes. Facebook groups encourage students to communicate in English with each other. It offers a space where students can write and receive feedback from their teacher, so they can improve their writing skills (Yunus & Salehi, 2012). In this regard, there is a need to understand students' perceptions about using Facebook groups to improve writing and to find out the main challenges the students face when joining Facebook groups. To fill this gap, this study will mainly focus on EFL students' views on integrating a Facebook group to improve writing skills outside the classroom.

2. Statement of the Problem

Technology plays an essential role in modern instruction. The syllabus nowadays focuses heavily on learner-centered instruction so that students can engage in work groups, discussions, or online interactive platforms (Kalyani, 2024). Facebook is one of these online platforms that is commonly used among EFL students in Al-Azizia, which can be integrated in improving writing skills. Facebook, especially Facebook groups can be a good tool for supporting self-learning and learner-centered instruction so that they can interact and improve their language skills. However, it has been noticed that EFL students in Al-Azizia tend to neglect integrating Facebook groups, particularly for developing their writing skills. This issue motivates researcher to investigate their beliefs to understand their attitudes towards using Facebook groups for improving writing skills and find out the challenges faced by students in applying Facebook groups in writing and assist them in considering this useful site for academic purposes. Moreover, little research has been conducted on EFL students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups to improve writing



skills in Libya. The potential results of this study can provide teachers with valuable insights into students' views on using Facebook groups.

3. Research Questions

What are Libyan EFL students' attitudes towards using a Facebook group to improve writing?

What are the main challenges that Libyan EFL students face in integrating Facebook groups into writing?

4. Significance of the Study

This study sheds light on the importance of integrating Facebook groups in learning English outside the classroom. It attempts to gain deep understanding of students' attitudes and views on utilizing Facebook groups as a learning tool for developing writing skills. It may contribute a new English learning technique for the teachers to use outside the classroom to enhance students' language proficiency. Also, this study is one of the first studies on using Facebook groups in the learning process in Al-Aziza. The findings of the current study can give teachers useful information about students' attitudes toward integrating Facebook into English learning.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Social Media for Writing Improvement

In recent years, social media has not only been used for communication, it has also been adopted for academic purposes. It can be utilized for enhancing English skills including reading, speaking, listening and writing. The latest research revealed that various types of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter can be beneficial tools for developing students' language proficiency and have a positive effect on improving English skills (Al Eidan, 2024).

Regarding English language skills, writing is one of the English skills that is not easy to learn by students. It is commonly found that students face challenges in the writing process due to the fact that they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and receiving feedback on their writing from their teachers and friends (Jamal, 2019). Teachers are required to reduce students' anxiety about their work and look for new ways of teaching to engage students in the writing process inside and outside the classroom. In this regard, social media can create a suitable space for writing practices to achieve learning goals. According to Samano (2014, as cited in Bakeer, 2018), social media platforms can be a good learning context for students to reinforce topics covered in the classroom. Rossida and Seftika (2019) also add that it provides students with



online content, which enables teachers to share information with their students and create particular tasks that can achieve learning objectives. Also, they state that linking learning goals with social media makes learning more interesting. Yunus and Salehi (2012) also state that English language learning is no longer restricted to the classroom. Most language learning takes place outside the classroom and in an informal context.

As a result, social media can offer a good context for writing practices outside the classroom where students can share information and do particular writing activities. The recent research conducted by Matline and Guardaquivil (2023) has found that social media supports self-learning and offers a supportive environment for instruction. As a timely reminder to the reader, this study focuses on integrating the Facebook groups, one of the social media platforms, with English learning to improve writing skills.

5.2 Using Facebook Group as a Learning Tool for Writing Improvement

Facebook is one of the social networks that is commonly used among students, and it is essentially used for social communication (Etriani et al., 2022). However, it can be used for expressing their knowledge and participating in group activities. In the Facebook group, students can interact with each other and with their teachers. Students will send their writing to the Facebook group and receive the teacher's feedback to develop their writing skills (Etriani et al., 2022). The Facebook groups provide students with the opportunity to post their ideas, which can be critiqued or praised. The students will raise their confidence, especially when their writing is approved by their peers or they can obtain valuable feedback from other students in the group. Moreover, FB groups help students explore new sentences when they read comments posted by other students (Kabilan et al., 2010).

In recent years, much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of using Facebook groups on writing improvement and the findings reveal that Facebook groups positively affects students' writing skills (Ping & Maniam, 2015, Altunkaya & Topuzkanamis, 2018, Etriani et al., 2022). Ping and Maniam's (2015) study attempts to discover the impact of Facebook groups on Malaysian university students' writing skills. They test the effect of the Facebook group by comparing a controlled group with an experimental group. The findings revealed that the experimental group outperforms controlled group which indicates that there is a significant impact of the Facebook groups on writing performance.

However, there are some challenges in integrating Facebook into writing instruction. According to Yunus and Salehi (2012), students may join the Facebook group but they may not be active members of the group. In other words, they may not interact, give comments, or discuss important issues in writing. Secondly, the Facebook group may be used for social purposes rather than using it for improving writing. A study conducted by Al-hazmi and Abdulrahman (2013) showed that the majority of students use Facebook for more social purposes such as social news and entertainment. Therefore, it is important to raise students' awareness of using Facebook,



particularly Facebook groups for academic purposes. To achieve this, it is essential to understand students' perceptions of integrating Facebook groups in writing practices and to identify the challenges students face when integrating Facebook groups into writing learning.

5.3 Previous Studies

In the recent years, some research has been conducted on students' perceptions about integrating Facebook groups in improving writing. There are several researchers have suggested that students have positive views on integrating a Facebook group in developing writing skills. For example, Yunus and Salehi (2012) conducted quantitative research to investigate 43 university students' perceptions. The results showed that a Facebook group is an effective technique in writing, particularly in the prewriting stage.

Jamal (2019) used a mixed methods design and adopted a questionnaire as an instrument to collect information from 36 students. He found that students have positive perceptions about using a Facebook group to improve writing.

Similarly, Bani-Hani et al. (2014) conducted a survey to investigate 42 EFL Jordanian students' perceptions about using Facebook groups in writing teaching. The data revealed that the Facebook group can be an effective way of teaching writing and students can expand their vocabulary knowledge when they read their friends' posts in the group. Friatin (2018) also carried out a qualitative study to investigate students' perceptions about using Facebook groups in writing teaching. He found that using a Facebook group in teaching writing made students feel enjoyed and motivated. This study aims to explore Libyan EFL students' perceptions about using a Facebook group to improve writing skills.

6. Methodology

6.1 Participants

This study was conducted at Al-Jafara University. A quantitative research design was employed to investigate Libyan EFL students' perceptions about using a Facebook group to develop writing skills. 35 students from the Faculty of Languages who enrolled in writing courses were randomly chosen to participate in this study. The participants included both male and female students, with the majority of 29 females. Their age ranged from 18 to 22 years old. The sample included students from various academic levels, including the first, second, third and final semesters.

The participants were invited to join closed Facebook groups created purposefully for them. The Facebook groups were designed to encourage students to use them as tools for writing and to familiarize themselves with integrating Facebook groups to improve writing. Hence, the participants were asked to actively participate by reading comments, posting their works, doing writing tasks, and getting teacher's feedback within the groups. They were also encouraged to



give opinions and share knowledge with other students in the group. The aim of all of this was to assist students in experiencing how Facebook groups could be an appropriate environment for developing writing.

6.2 Instrument

To obtain information from the informants, a questionnaire was used in this study. The questionnaire consists of 10 items adopted from Yunus and Salehi (2012). The hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students after three weeks of participating in the Facebook groups. The questionnaire that students answered was divided into three parts based on the research questions. Part one contains items concerning students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups in the writing process. Part two consists of three items regarding the affective domain of participants and its impact on their motivation in writing. The last part consists of two closed-ended items and two open-ended questions to identify the challenges that students face in applying Facebook groups in writing. The findings of the questionnaire were divided into two main data percentages of participants' selections, namely cumulative agree stands for "strongly agree" and "agree", and cumulative disagree stands for "strongly disagree" and "disagree". The option of "neutral" was avoided to make sure all participants choose either agree or disagree with all statements.

7. Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire consists of 10 items and organized according to the research questions. Microsoft Excel were used to analyze the closed-ended items including calculation of frequencies and percentages. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyze open-ended items, where students' responses were classified into main emerging themes. Qualitative information was used to support the main results of the questionnaire and to identify the potential challenges students face in applying Face book groups to improve writing.

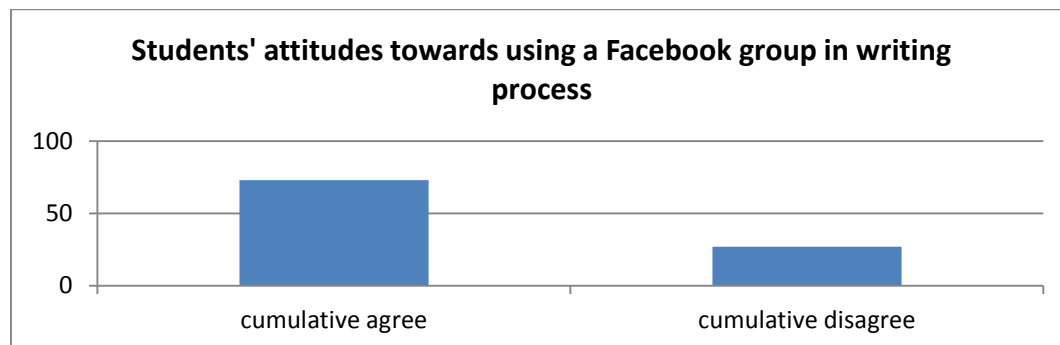
Students' Attitudes Towards Using Face book Groups to Improve Writing

Table 1

No.	item	cumulative agree	cumulative disagree
1.	Learning new words from reading the comments	80.0%	20.0%
2.	Brainstorming in a Facebook group organizes my ideas before writing.	60.0%	40.0%
3.	The spell-check feature helps me reducing spelling errors	82.8%	17.2%
4.	Getting ideas before writing	88.5%	11.5%
5.	It is easier to complete essays after	54.2%	45.8%

Participation

It was found that the majority of the students with percentage 73% believed that a Facebook group helps them improve the writing process.



As the data shown in the table 1 above, the majority of Libyan EFL students learn new words from comments posted by other members of the group. This indicates the importance of a Facebook group as a strategy in learning vocabulary, which is necessary in improving writing skills. This result aligns with the study conducted by Bani-Hani (2014), who investigated the effectiveness of utilizing Facebook groups in teaching writing and found that such platforms expands students' lexical knowledge. Most of them also believe that a Facebook group helps students reduce spelling errors by using the spell-check feature. Moreover, the majority of students agree that Facebook groups help in the pre-writing stage. As can be seen in the table 1, Facebook groups helps in brainstorming and in getting ideas before writing. This result highlights the role that Facebook groups play in organizing thoughts before writing. Facebook groups have interactive features such as group discussions and comments, which enable students to do brainstorming, receive feedback and share their ideas before engaging in actual writing. This finding is supported by some similar studies such as Jamal (2019) who found that a Facebook group helps students in the writing process including the prewriting stage. It also goes with Yunus and Salehi (2012) who concluded that Facebook is effective in developing the writing process, particularly in getting ideas before writing. This indicate that Facebook groups can be used as a tool for generating ideas before writing and encourage students to improve their writing in a more engaging environment.



Students' Attitudes Towards Facebook Group's Influence on Their Affective Domain

Table 2

No.	item		
1.	Feel comfortable posting my ideas Or opinions on a face book group	57.1 %	42.9%
2.	Feel motivated by my friends Liking my comments	80 %	20 %
3.	Prefer discussing on Facebook group Instead of the classroom	40 %	60 %

It was found that most students generally prefer to use a Facebook group in writing. As shown in the table above, most students feel comfortable posting their opinion with a percentage of 57.1 %. Moreover, 80% of them feel motivated when their friends like their comments. Students are encouraged and feel appreciated when their friends like their comments. This motivates them to post more frequently and participate actively in the group. This finding is supported by Friatin (2018) who found that Facebook groups in teaching writing make students enjoyed and motivated. However, most students prefer to discuss issues and topics in a classroom rather than a Facebook group. The reason behind that could be due to the fact the responses in the Facebook group are slow compared to the classroom where they can discuss directly face to face.

Students' Attitudes Towards Challenges of Using Facebook Groups in Writing.

Table 3

No.	item		
1.	I will read the material before sharing them	82.8%	17.2%
2.	Distract by other features of Facebook	54.2 %	45.8%

82% of students agreed that they read materials before they post it in the group. This indicates attitudes toward the responsibility that students have towards their posts in the group. They could be afraid of making mistakes in their posts or afraid of being criticized by other students in the group if they found mistakes in their comments. The teacher's role is important to encourage students in the group to post without hesitation and motivate them each time they comment in the group. Besides, most students believe that they are distracted by other features of Facebook such as Facebook Messenger and games. This feature may confuse students and attract their attention to other things. This may lead to the fact that students would spend much more time on this



distraction compared to the time given to academic purposes. According to the study conducted by Al-hazmi and Abdulrahman (2013), most of the students use a Facebook group for social purposes. Thus, the teacher should raise the students' awareness of such things and encourage them to manage their time.

Additionally, there are valuable responses to the open-ended questions designed to explore the challenges that students face in applying Facebook in writing. The data reveals that EFL students have different views on these challenges. Most students believe that they feel confused when students give several answers and feedback on the same questions or tasks. One of them said, " I feel confused when I get feedback from comments because sometimes I don't know which one is the correct answer". And this may lead to a long debate discussion among students in the group. This challenge can be overcome when the teacher actively participates in the group and gives the correct answer at the end of the discussion. Thus, students can focus on teachers' answers when there are several answers posted in a group. Most students feel embarrassed when they post in the group. One of the students said, " I'm afraid of making mistakes and being subject to negative comments". Moreover, using Facebook groups for social purposes is another challenge that has been identified. One of them said, "Sometimes students discuss social topics and issues in the group which is not related to learning English ". This finding supports al-Hazmy and Abdulrahman's (2013) study which reveals that students use a Facebook group for entertainment and social events. The teacher should be more disciplined and look into the topics that are discussed in the group.

8. Conclusion

This study was employed to investigate Libyan EFL students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups to improve their writing skills. There are positive preferences have been identified among students about using Facebook groups in writing. Most of them feel comfortable when they participate in the group, and feel motivated if other students like their comments. They also prefer to discuss issues and topics in Facebook groups. Besides, they believe that a Facebook group assists them in learning new words and the spelling-checker feature minimizes the number of mistakes in spelling. Additionally, Facebook groups help students in the pre-writing stage such as getting ideas and information before actual writing.

However, there are some challenges have been found that students face when they use a Facebook group in writing. Here are some of these challenges:

- Students are afraid of making mistakes and they read materials before they post them.
- Their attractions are sometimes distracted by other features of Facebook.
- They feel confused due to different answers posted in a Facebook group.
- They use a Facebook group for social purposes rather than academic purposes.



Limitations of the Study

The sample size is a small number; however, it is appropriate for this exploratory study focusing on perceptions of a specific group of students enrolled in writing courses. The results of this study may not be generalized to a large number of students but it provides valuable insights into students' perceptions and challenges of integrating Facebook groups to improve writing.

Recommendation

Similar qualitative studies to this study could be conducted to explore the effect of Facebook groups on enhancing writing skills. In addition, further studies may investigate teachers' beliefs on integrating Facebook groups into developing writing. Finally, This study provides a general picture of Libyan EFL students' attitudes towards using Facebook groups to improve writing skills, more studies about students' views using different methods to get deep investigation into the effect of using face book groups on their writing skills and lexical knowledge.

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